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***Days Ahead of New York’s Budget Deadline, Legal Aid Releases Video
Showcasing Importance of “Good Cause” Eviction Legislation***

(NEW YORK, NY) – The Legal Aid Society today released a [video](#) sharing the story of a New York City family currently facing eviction from their unregulated unit in The Bronx. After denying the family’s request to renew their lease, their landlord is now attempting to force the family out of their home — a process that, under current law, is legal as landlords of unregulated buildings do not have to provide justification for evicting tenants. If “[Good Cause](#)” were existing law, tenants in unregulated units would have protections against these displacement practices, including unwarranted rent increases.

“A Good Cause”



The Ellis Family

The video, which also features State Senator Julia Salazar - the prime sponsor of “Good Cause” eviction in the Senate - comes just days before lawmakers finalize New York State’s Fiscal Year 2024 budget. Earlier this month,

the New York State Senate and New York State Assembly released respective one-house budgets which included language [lending support](#) to ‘Good Cause’ eviction.

This formerly homeless family of ten is now being [forced out of their home](#) by the landlord, Jagjit Hora, who has for months ignored the family’s requests to make critical repairs, leaving their apartment in a state of disrepair.

When the family first moved in, they discovered that Hora had divided the unit and rented part of it to another tenant. Hora also refused to provide essential services such as hot water, cooking gas and heat.

The tenants complained to the City about the lack of essential services, and their complaints eventually led to a housing proceeding brought by the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) on March 8, 2021 against Hora in which the court ultimately ordered him to pay a fine of \$2,500.

After the tenants complained about repairs, their one-year lease expired and Hora refused to renew it, subsequently filing a holdover eviction lawsuit – a proceeding unrelated to non-payment.

Upon further investigation, Legal Aid attorneys discovered that Hora also owns six other non-regulated apartments through different LLCs and has brought at least six holdover proceedings in buildings where tenants have complained about lack of services and conditions.

HPD also commenced an enforcement action against Hora, undertaking some of the repairs, and charged Hora approximately \$20,000 on his August 2021 property tax bill for this work.

On January 31, 2023, the building was placed in the Alternative Enforcement Program, an HPD program for severely distressed buildings, where it remains today.

“The deplorable conditions this family has had to suffer is more reason for lawmakers to enact ‘Good Cause’ eviction in the budget,” said **Judith Goldiner, attorney-in-charge of the Civil Law Reform Unit at The Legal Aid Society**. “They simply called on the landlord to make needed repairs and received an eviction notice instead. Their situation is not an outlier, and it’s especially problematic that current law essentially allows landlords to retaliate with impunity against tenants who protest deplorable living conditions.”

“The experience of this family in the Bronx demonstrates exactly why it's urgent for Good Cause eviction to become law,” said **New York State Senator Julia Salazar**. “Families across the state continue to face a housing affordability crisis, compounded by excessively high rents and arbitrary evictions. Moreover, many renters are afraid to report poor conditions and code violations in their homes due to fear that their landlord will then retaliate by evicting them. We must include Good Cause eviction protections in the state budget to improve safety and stability for tenants.”

Background on ‘Good Cause’

“Good Cause” would require landlords to demonstrate a justification for evicting tenants in unregulated units, and would protect tenants from exorbitant rent hikes, restricting rent increases to either three percent or 1.5 times the inflation rate, whichever is higher.

The budget-neutral legislation would prevent landlords from denying lease renewals to tenants who have consistently abided by the terms of their leases, allowing tenants to advocate for repairs without the fear of retaliation.

On March 14, the New York State Senate and the New York State Assembly [released](#) their respective one-house budget proposals, which included language indicating support for “Good Cause”.

The legislation has [robust support](#) across the state, with nearly [70 percent of New Yorkers, including policy and political science experts](#) from all levels of government, in favor of passing “Good Cause”. [Small landlords, leaders of New York’s largest labor unions](#) and [New York State Attorney General Letitia James](#) also support “Good Cause”.

This past January, Legal Aid released an [analysis](#) of City data that revealed that since the statewide eviction moratorium lapsed last year, [executed evictions](#) in New York City have increased almost every month.

While it is unclear which of these evictions are related to non-payment or a holdover, which is an eviction proceeding unrelated to non-payment, it is safe to conclude that many of these tenants would have benefited if “Good Cause” were enacted statewide, given the depth and breadth of the legislation.

Legal Aid Housing Court attorneys currently represent [New Yorkers in hundreds of no-cause holdovers](#) across the five boroughs, often involving the most vulnerable tenants, whose eviction would be avoided should “Good Cause” pass into law.

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The Legal Aid Society exists for one simple yet powerful reason: to ensure that New Yorkers are not denied their right to equal justice because of poverty. For over 145 years, we have protected, defended, and advocated for those who have struggled in silence for far too long. Every day, in every borough, The Legal Aid Society changes the lives of our clients and helps improve our communities. www.legalaidnyc.org